SIKKIM

GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

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GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
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REGULATION FOR PROMOTION OF ECO-TOURISM IN FOREST AREAS (OUTSIDE NOTIFIED P.As) FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE & CULTURE.

In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (b) of section 33, read with sub-section (8) of section 35 and sub-section (2) of section 36A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (53 of 1972), clause (d) of section 76 of Indian Forest Act 1927 (16 of 1927), and clause (i) of sub-section (2) of section 83 of the Sikkim Forests, Water Courses And Road Reserve (Preservation And Protection) Act, 1988 (6 of 1988), the State Government hereby makes the following notification:-

1. Background and Need.

It is essential to have zonation of Forest areas for their effective management. Forest Areas should be zoned according to values in smaller pockets not necessarily as large cores, but a mosaic of smaller, manageable cores, spread in an area with tempered human use. Other zones for incentive programmes such as community based ecotourism need to be defined and set aside. The smaller cores should act as 'source' populations for sustaining fauna & flora populations of endangered species outside.

2. Aims and Objectives.

With an objective to promote sustainable community based ecotourism with minimum negative impacts and provide incentives to the local community from conservation, the ecotourism promotion zone is being defined and set aside in the State of Sikkim .

3. Criteria for designating nature trails and camping sites.

Existing nature trails and camping sites have been preferred. Camping right on the bank of high altitude lakes and in areas of critical conservation importance is to be discontinued.

4. Existing status, threats and gaps.

Community based Ecotourism is an important source of seasonal income for the villagers residing in remote areas. The impacts of unmanaged tourism are accelerating the rate of destruction in areas, which were once regarded as inaccessible. The negative impacts of unplanned tourism like deforestation due to the use of

firewood, unhygienic sanitation, garbage accumulation, smuggling of plants and animals have to be regulated and at the same time the benefits arising from this enterprise equitably shared. Unplanned tourism also threatens sensitive and biologically important high altitude wetlands, flora and fauna.

Unplanned tourism related pressure on the forest in terms of the firewood used for heating and cooking purposes has been more distinctly visible at some camping places. Water runoffs along the trail due to continuous trampling by the pack animals are bringing about soil loss along the trail and in the pasturelands. Another concern is the stray dogs, which accompany these trekking groups and prey on the ground nesting birds and lesser mammals. The pack animals e.g. horses, dzos and yaks used in the tourism enterprise compete with the wild herbivores for accessing the limited fodder resources in the summer pastures.

Due to the limited accommodation in the trekkers huts most of the tourists do camping in tents and toilet tents are widely used. Since campsites are not designated this has resulted in camping and setting up of toilet tents as per convenience. The porters and other support staff often defecate in the adjoining forests resulting in a spread of pollution. There is a shortage of permanent, functional, alpine toilets with running water facility in the camping sites. Also the pack animals do not have shelters at the designated camping sites.

5. Ecotourism Promotion Plan

(A) Ecotourism Promotion Initiatives

(1) Publicity of these regulations by installing adequate signages at Entry points and near the trekkers huts, camping sites and conservation area.

(2) Informing the travel agents, herders, pack animal operators, panchayats, JFMC/EDC and local NGOs about these regulations.

(3) Publicity of these regulations by taking out press release and launching a website of the forest department.

(4) Provide feedback forms and also web enabled feedback to the trekkers so that they can provide feedback on their trekking experience.

(5) Training and capacity building of travel agents, herders, panchayats, JFMC/EDC and local NGOs about these regulations.

(6) Designating the boundaries of the camping sites on the ground and providing basic amenities in the camping sites like running water, alpine toilets, kitchen cum porters barrack and pack animal shelters.

(7) These ecotourism promotion initiatives should be incorporated into the existing schemes and programmes of the various ongoing localized schemes of the department in order to provide adequate funds for implementation of this zonation and conservation management plan.

(8) The Tourism Department may also support in the promotion and development of the eco-tourism zone in the State of Sikkim.

(B) Ecotourism Regulations

(1) Movement of visitors and support staff is prohibited outside the designated nature trails and designated camping sites.

(2) Lighting of fire, cooking and "hot lunch" is not permitted on day treks.

(3) Movement of pack animals (horses, dzos and yaks) is prohibited into notified conservation zones.

(4) Movement of pack animals (horses, dzos and yaks) is prohibited on day treks.

(5) The "code of conduct" or conservation code for trekking in forest areas has been notified by the State Government under the "Sikkim Wildlife (Regulation of Trekking) Rules 2005". The punishment and penalty for violation of the same has also been detailed therein.

(6) These ecotourism regulations shall be enforced by the forest officers in coordination with the Eco-development and Joint Forest Management Committees.

(7) Other than forest officers, the Eco-development Committees (EDC), Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMC), registered Non Governmental Organizations (NGO), Himal Rakshaks and the trekking service providers shall be authorized to detect offences under these rules and arrest the offender if there is reason to believe that he will abscond. Any person so arrested shall be handed over forthwith to the nearest forest/wildlife/Police office.

(8) These provisions shall apply in addition to the laws relating to forests, environment, wildlife and biodiversity.

TOSAR LAKE TREK, NORTH SIKKIM:

INTRODUCTION:

The Tosar Lake in North District was proposed by the Mangan Tourism Development Committee (M.T.D.C) for development of Tourism in North Sikkim. Mangan Tourism Development Committee is a registered body (N.G.O) formed to develop Eco-Tourism in the North District as per the policy of the State Government.

A recce to the Tosar lake area was jointly conducted by the representative of the TOURISM Department & Forest, Environment and Wildlife management Department, Government of Sikkim on the request of Mangan Tourism Development Committee from 19th to 25th of July 2006. The report of the recce team with the proposed route for trekking to Tosar lake and photographs of its surrounding areas with map was submitted to the Department for an official recognition of the proposed trek as requested by the M.T.D.C . As per the direction of the department, Mangan Tourism Development Committee has submitted Environment Management Plan which is enclosed herewith for reference.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:

The Geographical area of North Sikkim is 4226 Sq Km. The proposed trek to Tosar Lake is located between 88'45' North Longitude and 27'28' to 27'30' East Latitude.

The Mangan Ridge is an East-West running ridge that straddles the center of North Sikkim. At the eastern end of the ridge is the Chola Range. Tosar Lake is located at the junction of the Mangan Ridge & the Chola Range. The maximum height of the ridge is about 4340 Mtrs at Maram Chu. The other important peaks on the Managan Ridge are Phyakchung about 3740 Mtrs, Anden peak – 3700 Mtrs and Pandot Peak 2375 Mtrs. The important spur is the Phodong spur running south wards from the main ridge. The Southern face of the Mangan Ridge is very steep where as the Northern face slope is gentler.The proposed trek passes through the Northern slope of the Mangan Ridge.

The Tosar Lake is located at the altitude of 4000 Mtrs or 1312o ft. To the South-East of the Lake is a giant cliff/mountain over looking the Lake which is considered scared and worshipped by the local people. The outlet of the Lake flows downward North-westwards which forms the main source of Cha king Chu.

3. DESCRIPTION OF TREK:

The proposed trek is to follow old traditional Yak and Cow trails in the Reserve Forest starting from Naga RF, Real RF, Meyong RF and Kaley RF with an altitude ranging from 1800 Mtrs to 4000Mtrs at Tosar lake. It

passes through wet temperate Foret of broad leaved species and bamboos, temperate forest of conifer & Queraus (Oak), Sub-Alpine forest of Conifer and Rhododendron and moist Alpine forest of Rhododendron mixed with Conifer and Alpine flora.The location of the trek identified are Mangan-Naga Village- Naksuk Forest (Naga RF) – Sohar-Dhe-Sohar Antsok patam Valley-Tosar Lake –Maram-Meyong Tar –Kaley Village & back. The designated Camp site and route.

Base Camp: The base camp of the trek is at Mangan, the District Head Quarter of North Sikkim. It is about two and half hour drive from Gangtok. It can be accessed directly from Siliguri via Singtam about five hour drive, the Government Tourist Lodge and hotels are available in and around Mangan Bazar.

Trek No. Trek Name	Designated Nature trails in forest area	Designated camp-site in forest area.
1. Tosar Lake Trek North Sikkim. Entry Point : Nasuk Naga RF Exit Point: Kaley Village	**1st day Trek**: The trek begins from the road head at Naksuk, Naga RF above Naga Village which is about an hour drive from Mangan base camp. The route follows very steep path used by herds of cows through wet temperate forest of board leaved species & bamboos. The distance of 1st day trek is about 12 Km. **First Camp Site:** Sohar Dhe-located at Altitude of 2750M or 8036 ft. **2 Day trek:** The second day trek passed through the Sub-Alpine forest of Conifer and Rhododendron at altitude range from 8000ft to 10500ft. **2nd and 3rd Day Camp site**: second camp site identified is Saohar Antsok patam valley at altitude of 10496ft the literally meaning of Sohar Antsok Patam Valley in Lepcha language means the Stamping ground of Musk Deer. **3rd Day Trek**: Rest and exploration of Valley. **4th Day Trek**: From Valley to up hill trek to Tosar Lake at the altitude of 13120 ft which passed through Rhododendron & Conifer forest with Alpine flora. The distance of the up hill trek is about 8 Km. **4th camp site :** The 4th camp site identified is about 1km below Tosar Lake. **5th Day trek and Camp site:** To follow the same route back to Maram Forest, which is identified as 5th camp site at the altitude of 10660 ft. **6th Day Trek:** To trek same route upto 1st camp site and then towards the Meyong Tar which is inside Meyong RF. **6th Camp site:** Meyong Tar at altitude of 10594 ft. **7th Day Trek:** From Meyong Tar to Kaley Village which passes through Kaley RF. **7th Camp site:** At Kaley Village out side the Reserve Forest. **8th Day Trek:** Back to Mangan base camp. **Total 7 Nights and 9 days trek.**	Sohar Dhe.Sohar Antsok patam, 1 km below Tosar Lake Maran, Meyong Tar, Kaley Village.

4. SEASON:

- Spring : April to mid of June.
- Summer : 15th June to August, rainy reason not suitable for trekking.
- Autumn: September to November.
- Winter: December to 15th of January is possible provided trekking party is properly equipped.

5. TREKKING AGENCY :

Mangan Tourism Development Committee is the solEY responsible for conducting of the trek to Tosar Lake by involving local registered tour and travels agent preferably based at Mangan to facilitate M.T.D.C to monitor and check the travels agents & trekkers using the area. Accordingly they will submit the details list of tour & travel agents in consultation with Tourism Department. The management plan drawn by the M.T.D.C for Tosar Lake trek has agreed the conditions stipulated by the APPC (T) and CCF (T) in their notings.

In addition to these conditions the M.T.D.C and Tourism Department has to abide by the Sikkim wildlife (Regulations of Trekking) Rules of 2005 (as amended upto 2007) enforced in the State of Sikkim with effect from 10th February,2005.

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Principal CCF -cum- Secretary
Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management
Government of Sikkim
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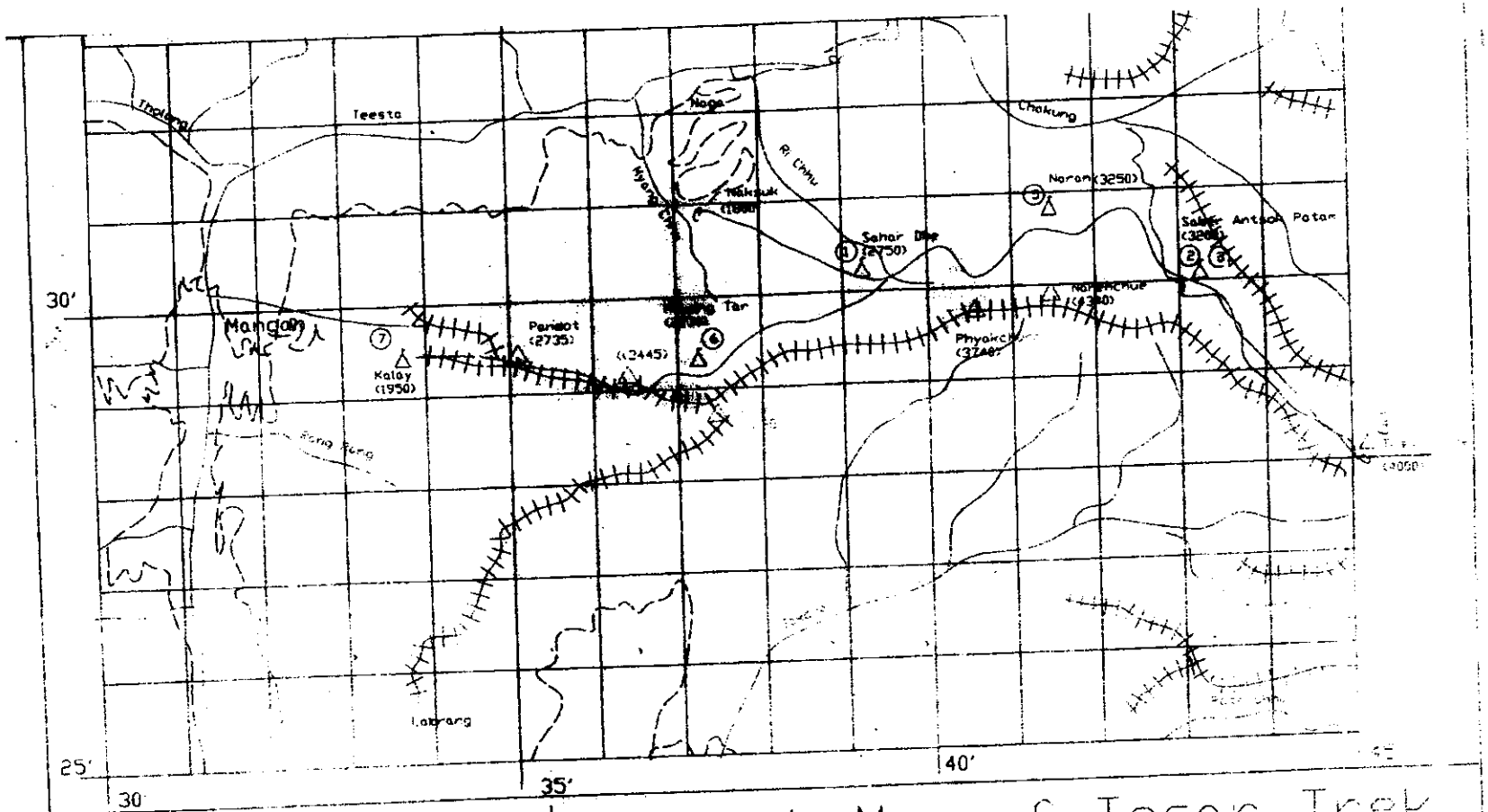

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